



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Fort McHenry National
Monument & Historic Shrine

2400 East Fort Avenue
Baltimore MD 21230

410-962-4290 phone
410-962-2500 fax

Fort McHenry News Release

Release date: Immediate
Contact(s): Vincent Vaise 410-962-4290 Ext. 201 (NPS, Fort McHenry)
Amy Burke Friedman 410-243-3790 (Balto. School Arts)
Date: Marc Apter: 410-685-3750 Ext 322 (Md. Historical

Fighting for Freedom! The Bicentennial is given a dramatic kickoff with a new play commemorating the start of the War of 1812

Kick off the War of 1812 Bicentennial at Fort McHenry in dramatic fashion with a performance of “Fighting for Freedom!” The first public performance will be held on **April 21, 2012 at 2:00 p.m.** Additional performances will be held on April 23 and 24 at 10:00 a.m at Fort McHenry and April 27 at the Maryland Historical Society at 6:00 p.m. In a collaborative effort between the Baltimore School for the Arts, Maryland Historical Society, and National Park Service, the production includes three scenes about the beginning of America’s Second War for Independence. This production is free of charge as part of National Parks Week and lasts approximately 45 minutes.

The production includes three original scenes that include the people history textbooks leave out:

“A Just War?” Experience the infamous Baltimore riots of 1812 in which thousands of angry citizens violently persecuted opponents of the war. Consider the attitudes of everyday citizens of Baltimore, black and white, free and enslaved, and discover why Americans were so bitterly divided over the conflict.

“Off to War!” The War of 1812 began with a series of invasions into Canada. Witness the romance and enthusiasm for a “quick war” gradually die as the conflict wears on. Learn the fate of “the Baltimore Boys” on the Niagara frontier and see how the war in Canada affected those back home.

“A Nest of Pirates” Listen in at a Fell’s Point Coffeehouse to hear the experiences of an African-American sailor, a privateering merchant, and a patient wife. Hear tales of swashbuckling sea captains who were the Pride of Baltimore and thumbed their noses at the world famous Royal Navy.

Students and faculty from Baltimore School for the Arts (BSA) worked together to develop scripts and produce the performances. The leading pre-professional arts high school in the country, the BSA teaches students the craft of acting and theater production along with a rigorous academic curriculum of English, history, science and math.

Students developed the themes for the plays by conducting research at the Maryland Historical Society’s (MdHS) library. “Students engaged in the historian’s craft and were immersed in the world of 1812 by closely analyzing personal letters, government documents, and political propaganda from MdHS’s archives,” says MdHS archivist-educator Dustin Meeker.

They then visited Fort McHenry NM&HS for inspiration. “This takes the classroom outside of the classroom. Young students like these add the enthusiasm and vitality that blow the dust off this chapter of history – the public is in for a real treat,” says Chief of Interpretation Vincent Vaise.

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™

The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.